

# The LENTINIST

## THIRD GORBACHEV/REAGAN SUMMIT Peace in Our Time?

THE AIR IS thick with talk of peace. Soon there will be a summit between Gorbachev and Reagan to conclude the much vaunted arms reduction treaty. It is said by some that the treaty will be a historic step forward for all mankind and even that it will be a first step towards a nuclear free world.

This is heady stuff and communists would do well not to be carried away with the idea that the US imperialist beast has been tamed. No sooner had Shevardnadze left for Moscow, indeed only two hours after the announcement of the interim agreement, the US Defence Department announced to the world that it was speeding up research on key areas of the Star Wars programme.

Communists should therefore look at the proposed treaty without any pacifist illusions whatsoever. We must look at things as they are, not as we would like them to be.

Telling the truth does weaken our movement. Our movement has had enough of those who can only echo the official line. There is no room for sycophancy towards the Soviet leadership. The Straight Leftist, NCP and CCG leaders praise Gorbachev every time he picks his nose. They insist his reforms are a revolution and the deal with US imperialism will bring peace in our time.

Of course, before Gorbachev became general secretary these same opportunists would have denounced the call for revolutionary change in the Soviet Union as Trotskyism. They defended and praised every action and for that matter crime of Brezhnev, Krushchev and Stalin. Of course, once they were denounced by their replacements, like the vicar of Bray, the centrists changed their denomination. These are yesterday's men.

We are not of this ilk. We say no adulation, no tailism of every twist and turn of Soviet foreign policy. We have seen where this leads to. We at least have learnt the lessons of the past, if others have not.

Friends speak openly. Where virtually every other section of our Party is saying the Gorbachev/Reagan summit is a great victory for the forces of peace, where the Eurocommunists and Straight Leftists have united in elevating the tactic of peaceful co-existence to a principle, we warn of the dangers of appeasing imperialism.

Comrade Gorbachev has called for openness in politics. We have long advocated this. It is in this spirit and with a total and undeviating commitment to the defence of the USSR and the world socialist system that we make this solemn warning.

In spite of the rhetoric of peace the US is still fronting a concerted anti-Soviet war drive. This is the truth. The source of this war drive comes from the very nature of imperialism itself, from the grow-

ing contradictions within the US dominated imperialist system. No treaty will change that. The US and its imperialist allies are out to destroy socialism, turn the socialist countries into docile neo-colonies and shore up imperialism's domination of the world market. This aim will inevitably be pursued first by peaceful means but then, failing this, by violent ones. War is after all only the pursuit and continuation of politics by other, violent, means.

We know that the survival of the world socialist system today depends almost entirely on the efforts and sacrifices of the socialist countries themselves, above all the Soviet Union. It has shouldered the main burden of enormous defence costs against the ever present imperialist threat. Its ICBMs have kept the peace.

The sacrifices of the Soviet Union have been made all the more onerous because of the ineffectiveness of the communist parties in the advanced capitalist countries. They have shunned revolutionary politics for the soggy delights of pacifism. The inability of these parties to build mass militant anti-imperialist movements has forced the Soviet Union to stand alone against imperialism.

The Soviet Communist Party – because it is the most prestigious party in the world communist movement, the communist party in the world's revolutionary centre – bears not a little of the blame for this situation. Nonetheless the communist parties in the west have embraced pacifism with an enthusiasm all of their own. The link between the struggle for peace and the struggle for revolution is denied or reduced to a mere ritualistic incantation of dead dogma. Far from this helping the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, as some claim, in the long term such politics have a poisonous logic.

At the end of the day all trace of genuine proletarian internationalism is killed, to be replaced by straightforward chauvinism – albeit covered with a radical veneer. Surely the French Communist Party's wrapping of its country's nuclear arsenal in the red flag and the tricolour, so it can be directed both east and west, is an example of this. So is the demand by the Communist Party of Italy for their country to stay in Nato, so as international stability can facilitate social reform. Likewise our CPGB's plea for defence of the interests of British imperialism through non-nuclear means. Such political positions are implicitly chauvinistic and leave the Soviet Union isolated.

We say: unconditional defence of the socialist countries; not a penny, not a man, for the defence of our imperialist country; the main enemy is at home; fight war with the fight for revolution.

CND-type marches, with their die-ins and 'take the toys from the boys' slogans are no substitute for a 'Hands Off Russia' type campaign, with industrial action and the threat of general strike. Today's declining band of pacifists, who our comrades rely on to win peace, are notoriously fickle. Just like their predecessors in 1914 they can easily jump on the chauvinistic bandwagon once it is rolling.

The symbolic linking of the Soviet and US embassies by the CND, the tendency for pacifists to blame the Soviet Union and the United States equally for the arms race, points to this as a distinct possibility.

Without communist parties in the imperialist countries winning masses of workers to the unconditional defence of the socialist world, without this proletarian internationalism, the Soviet Union has had to sacrifice its economy. Billions of roubles are siphoned off in order to keep pace with the US military juggernaut. This means the Soviet economy has grown at a slower pace than it could have and needs to. It also means Soviet workers have a lower standard of living than they could have had and to have.

With the ratcheting up of the stakes in the arms race by the US through its SDI (Star Wars) programme, pressures on the Soviet economy have been immensely increased. Gorbachev fears that if the Soviet Union does not construct its own version of Star Wars it will be exposed to a US World War III winning first strike. He also fears that, if it does match the US, at best the Soviet economy will sag under the strain and living standards will have to be pushed down, at worst this could result in a Polish-type scenario.

Diplomatic manoeuvring is seen as offering an escape route from the slippery slope to economic crisis or war. This is what the Soviet Union tried to do in 1939 when it signed a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany.

While treaties, detente and the like might stay imperialism's hand, this does not represent any lasting guarantee of peace. Indeed there is a danger that, in an effort to prevent imperialist aggression, imperialism is appeased. Too much can be given in the face of imperialism's warmongering blackmail.

At the 27th Congress of the CPSU Gorbachev offered to the US Soviet cooperation in dealing with what he called international hot spots. Unnamed countries, yes, but we suspect he was referring to countries like South Africa, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Angola.

This brings a sickness to our stomachs and sends a cold chill running down our spines. We remember what happened in 1939. Exiled German communists were returned by Stalin to Nazi im-

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fects Gorbachev's sober recognition of the reality of US political/military/economic strength and comparative Soviet political/military/economic weakness.

The only hope of beating the Star Wars system is to flood it, to overwhelm it. What then can we make of Gorbachev's positive response to proposals coming from Reagan and Shultz for a mutual 50% reduction in strategic nuclear weaponry along with what is reported to be a softening Soviet attitude towards Star Wars?

Reagan boasts that it is the Soviet Union, not the US, which has given most ground in negotiations. For a change he is telling the truth. We certainly cannot afford to kid ourselves that CND, END and other elements of the pacifist movement are responsible for the removal of US missiles from Europe. The fact that the *Morning Star* peddles this line shows just how removed it is from the real world. The pacifist peace movement has failed in every western country. In one election after another its preferred candidates tell before the warmongering tide.

Reagan represents a US imperialism which has seen the Pax Americana, established in the wake of World War II, slowly eroded. What this means, in plain language, is that the world division frozen since 1945 is melting. Hence war is on the agenda. Peace is under threat from the uneven development of the various imperialist powers, above all the US compared with Japan and Federal Germany.

Inter-imperialist contradictions never work themselves out in a straightforward fashion. Inevitably they suck the entire world into the vortex of their war. This is what happened in both the world wars this century. And at present the main friction and preparations for war is not between the main rival imperialist powers themselves. It is orchestrated by a still hegemonic USA and directed, like Hitler's, towards the east, towards the Soviet Union.

We understand that for imperialism peace can only be a preparation for war. The Soviet Union cannot change the nature of imperialism by compromising with it, offering unprincipled deals and disarming in an unequal way.

A permanent and just peace can only be achieved when socialism has triumphed on a world scale. This is the only way to guarantee peace. And to do this we must fight to support the existing socialist world by winning our working class to unconditionally defend it against imperialism's war drive. If we do this the best conditions will be created to nourish the world socialist system through adding to it by making new revolutions.

Jack Conrad



VIRTUALLY EVERY left group in Britain is publishing articles marking the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution. These articles will be used to stake a claim to be the true heirs of the Bolsheviks. Fortunately we do not have to wait for a revolutionary situation in Britain to test the revolutionary credentials of our numerous would be Bolsheviks. The Hungerford massacre exposed virtually all of them.

The left press confined itself to pious sermonising. Michael Ryan was a product of Rambo culture and a sick society. This was the limit of the argument. With the natural ideological dominance the ruling class enjoys in society, this leads to a craven retreat before reaction and an implicit refection of the ideas which triumphed in October 1917.

When the *Sundiscovered* Ryan had had a homosexual relationship the *Morning Star* and *7 Days*, amongst others, refused to counter the anti-gay smears. Given the anti-gay AIDS hysteria and the stench of Thatcherite Victorian values in the air, this is criminal. But where the main left groups exposed their antipathy to Bolshevism most strikingly was over the issue of guns.

Those who stood against the demand for tighter gun controls were the exception rather than the rule. The Blackpool congress of the TUC was typical. It unanimously agreed that there should be legislation tightening up existing laws and measures taken to protect children from TV violence. The government duly obliged.

And in spite of all the hoo-ha about carrying the torch of October, the TUC approach has been echoed in one 'revolutionary' left journal after another. Even those elements which have not been swept along behind the ruling class tidal wave for more gun controls have been pushed to offer anything approaching a Bolshevik alternative.

The SWP, *Militant* and *Socialist Organiser* rightly argued that TV censorship and more gun controls will not stop another Michael Ryan. But apart from defence of the status quo, most have had nothing positive to offer. This is not the case with *The Leninist*.

This paper has long argued, and will continue to argue, the necessity for arming the working class. Have no doubt about it, the essential feature of modern society is that the people are not armed and the ruling class is.

For us, arming the working class is not a matter for the distant future. It is a demand that grows from the clash on the picket line, resisting racist attacks on Asian families, bans on our demonstrations and above all the struggle for socialism.

The ruling class suffers none of the pacifistic or parliamentary illusions which befuddle so much of the left in Britain. It has been prepared to see countless millions die in its wars. And its warmongering continues. Ireland bleeds under the boot of a British imperialism which sabre rattles in the Gulf and has weapons directed against the Soviet Union designed to reduce whole cities to ashes literally in seconds.

And far from ruling class violence being confined to foreigners, the 1926 General Strike and the miners' 1984-5 Great Strike, Wapping and Broadwater Farm, indeed every minor challenge to the bourgeois order, brings forth a violent ruling class response against an unarmed and untrained working class.

We do not accept this situation as inevitable or permanent. In the spirit of the October Revolution we say: no to gun controls, the working class should be armed and trained in the use of the most advanced weapons it can lay its hands on.

*The Editor*

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## LETTERS

### USSR

I must take issue with Alan Merrick's description of the USSR as a society based upon commodity production in which the law of value still operates and, by implication, that it is a state capitalist society. Even more remarkable is his assertion that the USSR is not fundamentally different from when Lenin was writing.

He states that the 1917 revolution did not abolish capitalism, it smashed the bourgeoisie. This is fair enough, but what about the economic and social revolution of 1929 to 1931 that abolished capitalist ownership of the means of production and socialised agriculture? If that is not a fundamental change it is difficult to see what would be.

With the establishment of the five year plans, market allocation of the means of production ceased. Instead they were located a priori through the planning mechanism. Although products still had a notional price, within the state sector they ceased to be commodities in any normal sense of the word. As they moved from one factory to another they remained state property and the accounting prices used to record these movements were set by Gosplan rather than the market.

The law of value is an ambiguous phrase. Marx had a theory of value, but he never formulated a law of value in the sense that Newton formulated laws of motion. It is thus not exactly clear what Merrick is asserting, but those who use the term generally seem to mean the fluctuation of market prices into line with values (or transformation values). In this sense the 'law of value' has not operated in the USSR since the '20s.

Merrick rather paradoxically goes on to argue that there is a danger of capitalist restoration in the USSR, so he seems unsure of his initial position. Here I would agree. One has only to look at countries like Yugoslavia, Hungary and China, where revisionist economic policies have undermined state property in the means of production and progressively substitute market allocation for planned allocation of the means of production, to see the dangers.

In these countries we see the contradictions that arise from the combination of capitalist with socialist modes of production: inflation, unemployment, growing polarisation of wealth and poverty, increasing political influence by the new bourgeoisie.

It is too early to say if the USSR is on the same track, but there clearly exists a body of economists who are vocal advocates of what amounts to capitalist restoration. Why is this?

It is quasi Trotskyist oversimplification to attribute this to capitalist encirclement. Like all modes of production, socialism has internal contradictions, economic ones and class ones. The fate of humanity depends upon understanding these as clearly as we understand those of capitalism, so that communist politics in socialist countries can have a sound theoretical basis and not degenerate into an establishment apologetics which has proven singularly ineffective in fighting revisionism.

**Paul Cockshott**  
Glasgow

*David Sherriff replies:*

Socialism is not a "mode of production". It is a transition between the capitalist and communist modes of production and contains elements of both. To say the law of value no longer operates in the USSR, to say there is no com-

modity production, is logically to say it has reached communism, which it patently has not. We do not consider the USSR state capitalist, in the Tony Cliff sense of the word. It is therefore not at all "paradoxical" to talk of the danger of capitalist restorationism. This danger is not only external but internal. It is a danger that exists precisely because of the continued operation of commodity production and the law of value.

Trotskyists were leading the struggle against Stalinism in the USSR I gave a heavily choked bray of ill-mannered laughter. I must confess I was unable to obey Coleridge's injunction for the appreciation of literature and to accept a 'willing suspension of disbelief'.

**John Pike**

### IRSP Ard Fheis

The Irish republican socialist movement, since surviving the murderous attacks upon it by a dilettante grouping of opportunist petty bourgeois idealists and criminal elements, has restructured itself to continue its revolutionary historical fight for the interests of the Irish working class through a Marxist programme that inextricably links the class liberation of the Irish proletariat to that of the national liberation struggle against British imperialism.

The Irish Republican Socialist Party itself will soon hold its first Ard Fheis since 1984. Other Ard Fheiseanna have in recent years been abandoned because of the intense degree of repression being waged against this revolutionary socialist organisation by the British and Irish state machinery, and that of the former counter productive elements who unsuccessfully tried to divert the IRSP from fulfilling its historical role.

This year's Ard Fheis will be centred on a document produced by the late Thomas 'Ta' Power who examined the failings of the movement and how the party could move forward under the principled demands of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organisation stressing the primacy of politics as a necessary premise to the development of the IRSP as the vanguard party of the Irish proletariat.

Coupled to the important work of reconstructing the IRSP is the function of its support groups internationally. The immediate task in Britain is the continuation of building revolutionary socialist branches in agreement with the policies and politics of the IRSP. We believe that only under the leadership of the IRSP as a revolutionary party with a programme based on Marxism fighting for the overthrow of the bankrupt imperialist/capitalist system, can the integrity and independence of the Irish proletariat be assured. Therefore we urge socialists, trade unionists, women and youth in Britain who struggle for the cause of Ireland and labour to join us and take part in supporting the building of the party and contributing towards the deeper study of revolutionary Marxism as advanced by the theory and practice of the IRSP and its fraternal support groups.

Further information relating to the activities of the IRSP support groups in Britain can be obtained by contacting Box 32, Full Marks Bookshop, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol, Avon, or Clyde Books, 19 Paradise St, Glasgow, Scotland.

**Gerry Collins**  
IRSP Bristol Support Group

*Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.*

### WRITE OR RING

If you would like to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist* please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Or phone us on 01-431 3135.



Costello and Chater: Happier Days

## Which Way Forward for the Morning Star?

*This leaflet is being distributed at the Morning Star Readers and Supporters meetings which are now taking place up and down the country. We show that the Morning Star cannot survive under the domination of opportunism*

**R**EADERS and supporters of the *Morning Star*, you want to know the truth. You also want to save the *Morning Star*. Tony Chater and Mary Rosser have convincingly shown they do not understand the need for honesty and the collapse of the so-called survival plan shows they have no answers.

This is not because of stupidity or lack of commitment to the *Morning Star*. The failure of Chater and Rosser is at root political. The *Morning Star*'s crisis is organically tied to the crisis of the Communist Party, it is a crisis of opportunism. Unless this is realised and acted upon the *Morning Star* cannot be saved as a communist paper.

Because Tony Chater always saw the crisis of the *Morning Star* as essentially technical he sought technical solutions. This has proved disastrous. Under his leadership the management committee has sacrificed the work of generations of communists who sweated blood to found and then build a daily communist paper in Britain. One hundred thousand pounds of shareholders' money was wasted installing the Urbanite Mark II white elephant, 75 Farringdon Road has been sold and jobs have been slashed. This 'flexible' interpretation of the so-called survival plan was only got through the management committee with the casting vote of non-elected member, Mary Rosser; no wonder Mick Costello has decided to call it a day.

Supporters of the *Morning Star*, no one can criticise you for your lack of loyalty. But loyalty, while praiseworthy, can be misdirected. In the belief they would guarantee the survival of the *Morning Star* you have stood by the paper's editor, Tony Chater, and the management committee.

In all comradeship we Leninists say to you: your loyalty has been abused. It will take courage for you to admit this, but genuine communists do not fear the truth, no matter how bitter.

The fact is that by breaking the historic link between the *Morning Star* and the Communist Party – which sustained it through thick and thin – Tony Chater guaranteed the crisis that now threatens the very existence of the paper.

Yes, the Eurocommunists were just as guilty as Tony Chater, yes their politics are abominable to all class conscious workers, but communists should be ruled by their heads, not their hearts.

When it became clear that Tony Chater was set on a course that would lead to a split with the Communist Party, we took the decision to support the Executive Committee's candidates, not because we support the ideas of Eurocommunism, but because we support the right of the Communist Party to control what was, except in formal terms, one of its publications.

Although this was unpopular with many of you, we explained that the political positions of Tony Chater and the management committee were liquidationist, thoroughly opportunist and destined to lead the *Morning Star* deeper into crisis.

The subsequent practice of Tony Chater has indubitably proved us correct. Lenin once said that honesty in politics is a sign of strength. This is a profound truth. Chater's lack of glasnost, cynical manipulation of readers' pro-Soviet sentiments and their gut hatred of Eurocommunism, his hiding behind committees and sub-committees, are signs of bankruptcy.

The survival plan was launched ostensibly in the interests of preserving jobs at the *Star*. The only job Chater seems to think important is his own. He has acted more like a Rupert Murdoch than a principled communist. Printers have been systematically sacked and William Rust House is now the property of the owner of the trashy 'tits and bums' *Sunday Sport*.

Yet, with all around them in tatters, Chater and his opportunist entourage struggle to keep up the facade of 'business as usual'. At this year's PPPS AGM's, when the sale of the building must have been under negotiation, Mary Rosser claimed that the 'survival plan' was still operational – its form had merely changed a little.

Until recently the editor had the cheek to advertise shares in 'our new press' when the *Morning Star* was being printed by the SWP. This is an example of the school of propaganda which says it is easier to get the people to believe a big lie than a little one. Genuine com-

munist have no interest in lying, but this is not the case with opportunists. We say enough of lies, half truths and excuses.

Supporters of the *Morning Star* need to know how things have reached such a sordid state of affairs. Let us be blunt. Chater rebelled not from principle but because the Executive Committee of our CPGB threatened to take what he had come to regard as his paper away from his control. His sudden conversion to 'pro-Sovietism' carries no conviction. It was a ploy to maintain financial support and get certain oppositionist leaders to back him.

What resulted was a heterogeneous grouping, later to proclaim itself the Communist Campaign Group, which like a Judas goat is leading its rank and file towards a split. The CCG says it wants to reestablish the CPGB. Yes, Eurocommunism must be defeated. Yes, the CPGB must be reformed. This cannot be done by a grouping which stands on a reformist programme like the *British Road to Socialism*.

You cannot defeat this year's revisionism with last year's revisionism. All that a CCG 'party' will achieve is the reproduction of all the contradictions of our CPGB in the mid-1970s, but on a lower level.

The CCG split will only serve to disillusion. Undoubtedly, the CCG 'party' will fragment and disintegrate faster than even the NCP. Chater will still regard the *Star* as his personal property. The CCG split will not be able to save the *Morning Star*. It is part of the crisis of opportunism in the communist movement, it is not the answer.

Now that the consequences of Tony Chater's politics are becoming clearer day by day, we urge all genuine communists in the CCG to enter into discussions with the tendency around *The Leninist*. Only our Marxist-Leninist politics can save the *Morning Star*. Only our Marxist-Leninist open and principled ideological struggle can reforge the CPGB. We are the way forward.

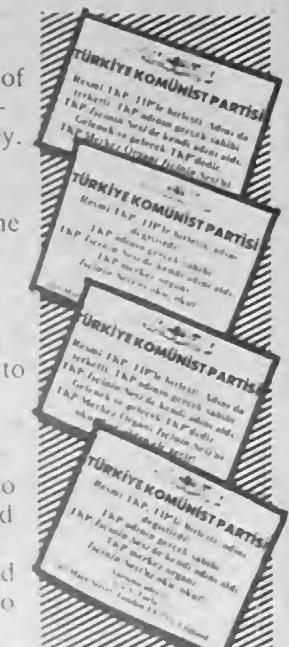
**Break with the CCG!**  
The place for all genuine communists is in the CPGB!  
Defend and reforge the CPGB!

## PARTY PIECES

Politics makes for strange bedfellows. Some time ago in the midst of the miners' Great Strike of 1984-85, we commented that given the rightist orientation of both groups, it was only really the prejudice of their historical origins that kept our Eurocommunists and the Trotskyites of *Socialist Action* out of each other's arms. Recent developments in Australia show that there at least prejudice and historical origins are no problem. The CP of Australia down to a Eurocommunist rump of just over 1,000 plans, along with the erstwhile Trotskyites of the Australian Socialist Workers Party, to liquidate itself into "a new mass party and electorally relevant party to the left of the Australian Labour Party." Such is the nature of petty bourgeois politics. Where, one wonders, will our Euros end up?

The Communist Party of Turkey is dead. The 'official' CPT has liquidated itself and merged with the petty bourgeois socialists of the Turkish Workers Party, to form the so-called United 'Communist' Party of Turkey. But the CPT lives. In early September we received a statement announcing the 6th Congress of the CPT. It declared that: "The Congress which had only one point on the agenda, reclaimed the name of the party from the official CPT which was only unjustly and with a false content using this name, but on this basis was also preparing to officially liquidate the party. Because opportunism has led the process of development of the party into a maze, the name of the CPT was usurped by those who neither had theoretically nor politically and organisationally any relation to this name. On the other hand, the real CPT had added the name of its central organ *Iscin Sesi*, to the name of the party. This situation was temporary, and due to rapid development of opportunism it ended sooner than expected. Our 6th Congress, evaluating the developments, decided unanimously, to readopt the name of the CPT instead of the CPT – *Iscin Sesi*, *Iscin Sesi* which raised high the banner of communism honourably and successfully in its fight against the bourgeoisie and opportunism, is now the central organ of the Communist Party of Turkey. The 6th Congress was an extraordinary congress. However, by taking this important decision, it placed the process of development back to its ordinary course."

The editor of *The Leninist* sent the following message to the CPT: "Congratulations on the 6th Congress of your Party. The unanimous decision to readopt the name Communist Party of Turkey is fitting. Opportunists have no right to such a proud name. The 6th Congress represents another glorious milestone in the principled, skillful and successful struggle you have waged against opportunism. We salute you in the sure knowledge that every victory you score is a victory for every true partisan of the world proletarian revolution."

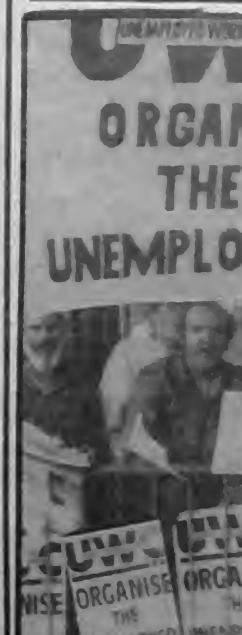


● Tens of thousands of stickers announcing the death of the 'official' CPT and the birth of the Leninist-led CPT have appeared in towns and cities throughout Turkey.

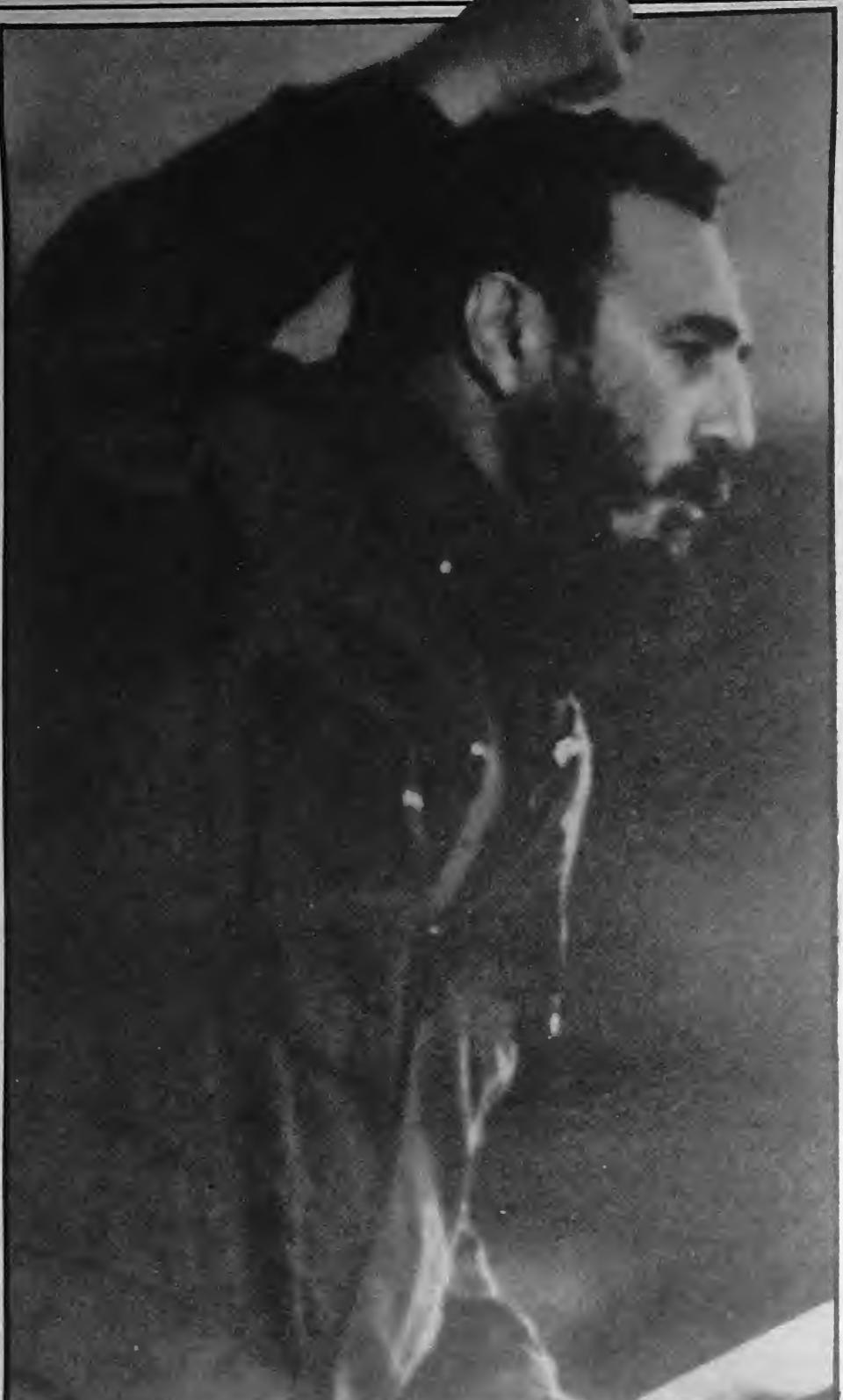


It is worth noting the amendments to rules 14 and 15 submitted by the Executive Committee of our CPGB. Both amendments delete mention of the *Morning Star*. Instead of replacing the words *Morning Star* with *7 Days* we get vague formulations like "Party publications". Could it be that the days of comrade Myant's dull and eclectic paper are numbered?

## On our Record



No left wing publication runs at a profit. But where the *Morning Star* can sell off Farringdon Road, where *Marxism Today* let the Executive Committee pick up a £19,262 bill in 1986 to pay for its autonomous future and *7 Days* still limps on in spite of a £31,523 loss *The Leninist* has no fat from the past from which to leech. Our paper has defiantly raised the banner of open ideological struggle for communism, it has stood firmly against the flood tide of liquidationism and the compromisers with opportunism. We have to stand or fall on this record. That is where our readers come in. Our £600 monthly fund is still falling short. In September we only received £357. This is not enough. We need you to send in regular donations – take out a banker's order. If you can't manage that, make provision for us in your will. Above all sell extra copies of the paper and win us new readers.



*Fidel broke from  
left nationalism  
and embraced communism.  
The same task confronts  
the IRSP*

# Red or Green



**I**N AUGUST comrades from *The Leninist* and the Irish Republican Socialist Party held a joint summer school in Belfast. Despite state harassment (some IRSP comrades on their way to the school were arrested and spent days in Castlereagh) this did not stop the school being a great success.

It deepened our understanding of the development of the IRSP and of Irish politics generally. We would also hope that it facilitated the process of political clarification which the IRSP is now undergoing.

The republican socialist movement has emerged from a feud between itself and a loose grouping of erstwhile members going under the name of the Irish People's Liberation Organisation (AKA, 'Army Council' faction of the Irish National Liberation Army) over the principle of 'the primacy of politics'. Many valuable comrades, such as Thomas Power, John O'Reilly and Michael Kearney, where murdered by the IPLO for struggling to

assert this. But the principle was won, with the moral and military defeat of the IPLO gangsters.

Now that 'the primacy of politics' has been asserted, the IRSP comrades must decide exactly *what kind of politics* they have fought for.

## Clarification

The IRSP is the product of a tradition – republicanism – which has never been based on theoretical clarity. Instead of theory guiding the line of march, the movement merely responded in a knee-jerk fashion to its surroundings and used 'theory' to justify this.

What theory there has been is of a decidedly petty bourgeois and eclectic nature. Many comrades had received no prior political education in the republican socialist movement, whereas others with political traditions predating their involvement with the movement had, in the words of one comrade, allowed themselves to be dragged down to the

movement's mean.

The school's week of intense political debate and discussion enabled comrades to come to grips with the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. It also therefore brought to light many areas that had not been fully discussed in the movement.

The IRSP's declaration at its 1984 Ard Fheis (congress) proclaimed that the party based itself "on the principles of Marxism-Leninism". Now, we all know that this declaration was never implemented, but even if it had been, the term 'Marxism-Leninism' can hide a multitude of sins. Just look at the plethora of organisations that claim Marxism as their own in Britain. In fact, just look at those which do so in Ireland – from the pro-imperialist Workers Party, and that stagnant pool of opportunism, the Communist Party of Ireland, to the oddball pro-Albanian sect, the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist). Are they all Marxist-Leninists? Are any of them? Surely not!

It is not just a case of being more militant, more left than your adversaries, that makes you a Marxist-Leninist, it is fundamentally your theory.

To think that theory spontaneously arises, or that it merely needs to be declared frequently enough, is pure folly. Communists develop the highest level of theory, both through independent analytical development and through a willingness and ability to absorb the past lessons of Marxism and to learn the lessons that the struggle *world wide* produces today.

It is not merely a question of 'pick and mix' politics – a term from here, a tactic from there – to justify your practice in a more weighty fashion, but the ability to use the Marxist *method*. This method, like any other, has general principles, some befitting the epoch, some absolute.

It is to establish these principles that the school was organised on a general level. Many openings were given on the basic principles of Marxism, and others on the lessons of Bolshevism. Questions of 'immediacy' were only approached later in the school, after being informed by more 'abstract' topics. Thus a foundation was laid to sharpen later debates and therefore make them far more productive.

## Dissension

So what were these 'sharp' debates over? Inevitably in an organisation that is only now developing a grasp of theory, any time a new question was posed, dissension arose.

For instance, on the women's question. A female comrade eloquently told how the republican movement consigns women to the position of auxiliaries. They run the guns while the men use them. They picket the prisons while the men languish within. Of course the situation is not so straightforward, but, as any Irish revolutionary will tell you, there is an element of truth here. The school looked at how to break from this tradition, how to handle these past problems. In short, how do you win working class women for communism?

The resolution of the feud with the 'macho men' of the IPLO has not resolved this question. Far from it. The situation in Ireland tends to produce a state of affairs in serious revolutionary organisations where the men often use their family lives as a refuge from the pressures of the struggle. Far from attempting to win their wives/girlfriends, such a situation is discouraged, for it would wreck the home as a "refuge".

This was highlighted in the debate on communists and religion where it was pointed out that, although IRSP comrades were as a rule atheists, their homes were adorned with religious symbols. In the interests of the 'quiet life' many have failed to attempt to fight through their ideas in the home. This in reality creates greater stresses and therefore weakens party morale. Communist culture in social life is as important as communist discipline in political life. As one IRSP comrade commented, "how can we hope to win women in Ireland to the revolution, if we can't even win our wives?"

The solution put forward by a number of comrades was the establishment of women's sections in the party. This, it was argued, would give the women confidence in their own abilities by caucusing independently, hence avoiding past problems of women entering a party organisation and being considered 'fair game' by male comrades who comprise the overwhelming majority.

We would, and did, argue that this is an incorrect approach to the matter. Not least of all because the discussion that took place followed on from a previous debate on the lessons of Bolshevism. Here it was emphasised how Lenin fought any attempt to divide the party into separate autonomous units (eg the Jewish Bund). Although comrades who took the pro-women's section position asserted that this would in no way entail an attendant right for this section to organise women without party interference, we feel that this policy is nevertheless divisive.

Why? Because it negates the monolithic nature of the party and because it precisely allows males in the party to abdicate responsibility for the women's question. A women's section within the party would formalise this. Have the moves along these lines in Sinn Fein qualitatively improved the standing of women in the republican movement? No, politically there have even been steps backwards.

We argued for the establishment of women's committees, comprising of male and female comrades, to study and carry out work on the question and, in addition, that a form of reverse discrimination in the party should

be enacted. This would entail women, when and wherever possible, being promoted into positions of command and responsibility within the party. Such measures would force all party members to take women revolutionaries and women's oppression seriously.

This was the position of the Communist International under Lenin: 'The 3rd Congress of the Communist International is firmly opposed to any kind of separate women's associations in the Parties and trade unions or special women's organisations, but it accepts that special methods of work among women are necessary and that every Communist Party should set up a special apparatus for this work ... This apparatus must consist of departments or commissions for work among women, attached to every Party committee at all levels, from the CC of the Party right down to the urban, district or local Party committee. This decision is binding on all Parties in the Communist International.' (*Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*, pp217-8)

## Nationalism and internationalism

The questions of how a revolutionary party relates to the world revolution, how it learns and develops its principles, strategy and tactics in the light of this, are questions on which any revolutionary party will stand or fall. They are fundamentally questions of method.

One IRSP comrade commented that it is dangerous 'to falsely transpose the lessons of Russia, Turkey or Britain to Ireland'. And indeed he is right.

Let us take, for example, a revolution which at first sight seems to be closely analogous to the Irish experience. It is one that the comrades in Ireland rightly draw inspiration from: Cuba. The parallel seems obvious - the waging of a low level guerilla war against apparently impossible odds, the hostility of the official Communist Party and the lack of involvement of the labour movement.

But what lessons can be drawn from this for communists in Ireland? The Cuban guerilla war was fought in a backward capitalist country with a rural population being the first to be won to the revolution. The bulk of Cuba's income came from sugar, tobacco and prostitution.

Ireland is hardly in such an impoverished position as Cuba was. It is a medium developed capitalist nation and a member of the European Community - what is in essence a Western European imperialist bloc. What is going on in Ireland is basically an urban not a rural struggle. Its revolutionary situation revolves around the question of the border and an imperialist power considers the northern six counties part of its state. This was not the case with Cuba. Andersonstown is not the Sierra Maestra.

Whereas the revolutionary situation in the Six Counties provides the objective basis for a guerilla struggle, as did conditions in Cuba in the 1950s, the socio-political nature of its revolutionary situation necessitates a different approach.

Yet, reflecting left Sinn Feiners' hopes, one IRSP comrade looked for parallels. He floated the question, 'could Gerry Adams be a closet Marxist?' Naturally the example he gave was that of Fidel Castro, who did not proclaim himself a Marxist-Leninist until after his movement had carried through the revolution. Could this then be a tactic applicable to the revolution in Ireland? A simple answer: no.

Castro did not proclaim himself a Marxist until after the revolution simply because he was not a Marxist until then. It was not a tactic, it was reality. He started his political career as a revolutionary democrat and was compelled leftwards by the objective situation in which Cuba found itself after the 1959 revolution. In the face of intransigent hostility from the Cuban bourgeoisie and the United States, Castro and his movement were drawn to the working class nationally and internationally.

The USSR gave aid to the Cuban revolutionary state against the US. Castro's July 26 Movement, along with the official world communist movement Socialist Party, formed the Communist Party of Cuba. This could only have happened because of exceptional circumstances and it only happened through struggle, with old ideas being fought and new ideas being forged in the heat of struggle.

Such a leap forward was not the result of some Machiavellian scheme hatched years earlier. Before 1961 Castro was not a communist, he was moving towards it, and when he became one he proclaimed it. In the words of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*,

'Communists do not deign to conceal their views'. This is as true for communists in Ireland as it was for Castro and Marx and Engels.

But the comrade who warned of the danger of falsely transposing lessons of the international revolution was not speaking of Cuba. The same comrade said that the IRSP will take what it finds useful from the experience of the international revolution. He had also wanted to 'select' what was 'useful' from the experience of the early Communist International. What did he mean by these statements? Surely, given the IRSP's past entrapment in a purely national view, problems arising from the false application of international experience are the least of its worries.

As we argued above, it is not a question of extracting this or that statement from Marx, Engels or Lenin. Even if this or that statement they made has been invalidated by subsequent developments, it is a case of applying and developing their *scientific method*. This is not something you pick and choose with. Remove part of an engine and it will not go. The school dealt with the development of the Marxist method. We were not primarily concerned with what Marx or Lenin said here or there, but how they arrived at their conclusions. 'False transposition' does not come into it, so why warn against it?

One of the lessons from the international movement which was being 'falsely transposed' was that of the Leninist party structure, as opposed to the 'women's section' approach to the party. This is not a *tactic* to be accepted or rejected as is seen fit. It is an organisational *principle* of communist parties. The tactics of communists change. Indeed, tactics should be viewed as infinitely flexible. Communist principles are not. Choose to reject them - or, for that matter, part of them - and you reject communism.

As Lenin stood on Marx's shoulders, we must stand on Lenin's. This is something that this comrade was most wary of doing - of completing and formalising a clean break with left nationalism and of going on to become something qualitatively different. We should be critical, yes, but that should not entail falling into the trap of eclectic left nationalism, as this comrade's position does in effect.

## The Revolutionary Paper

The need for a paper was something that all comrades agreed on. The fact that the IRSP had had no national press for three years is something that all are only too well aware of. But it cannot just be a *news* paper, neither can it be a more left wing *An Phoblacht/Republican News*. It must be a paper of Marxist-Leninist ideas, of theory. The ideological confusion and the lack of clarity of the IRSP can only be resolved through the medium of a paper armed with the most advanced theory.

Many members of the movement might find it 'heavy going' to start with. Certainly 'the man and woman on the street' will find it hard to grasp. But we must address ourselves to the question of the function of the paper, who it is directed at, and why.

Of course it must be directed at the members and supporters of the IRSP. However, the paper should not satisfy itself with addressing members at their present level. It must act as an educator, developing the understanding of its supporters and, by doing so, develop a cadre, a nucleus of political leaders armed with advanced Marxist-Leninist theory.

This will not be an easy process and some present members of the movement will in all likelihood be discouraged by the prospect. This is inevitable, but a resolute approach to the production of a highly theoretical paper will reap tenfold benefits. Those who 'stick with it' will be carried forward by the paper, will develop as the paper and party develop. And the paper will attract fresh people, not at first average workers, but the most advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals.

In short, the vanguard. It is at these which the paper must be aimed. A paper which challenges the ideas of the vanguard by its own, more advanced and coherent ideas, and succeeds in uniting those ideas with practice, will win hegemony over it.

An example of the potential of vanguard militants who could be swiftly won to the banner of revolutionary communism, should the IRSP hoist it, must be the Communist League in Long Kesh (see reviews page in this issue). In Ireland today, unlike Britain, people are looking for a revolutionary alternative and can be won to a party which can effectively present itself as such. And it does that primarily through its ideas, its paper.

## The Revolutionary Leadership

Marxist-Leninist papers, of course, are not produced spontaneously. Someone, somehow, must undertake to do it. What is needed is a firm lead. The nettle must be grasped. The IRSP now puts great store by democracy within the movement. And of course democracy is important. But it is not *central*. The development of a resolute revolutionary leadership is the most vital task for the IRSP. Someone must develop the ideas published in the paper, someone must lead.

There is a great tendency in the IRSP to be overly deferential to the rank and file, for whatever reason. This was illustrated by the comment of one IRSP comrade who expressed a concern about 'confusing people with Marxist jargon'. Indeed, no Marxist worthy of the name goes out to intentionally be confusing. But Marxism is a science and, like any other science, has its own attendant 'jargon'.

For instance, try explaining the most basic level of atomic structure without reference to 'neutrons', 'protons', 'electrons' or 'orbitals'. Try to do an appendectomy without knowing where and what the 'colon' is. Yet these are all examples of 'jargon' - 'jargon' without which science would be far more convoluted and confusing.

It is the same with Marxism. You cannot understand capitalism without understanding the concepts of 'value' and 'use value'. And if you cannot understand what capitalism is, how do you propose to overthrow it?

These are tasks primarily for the leadership. It must develop the rank and file. But to do so it must first develop itself. To talk of 'jargon' in this context is pure philistinism. It is a cop-out from developing oneself, from taking up the challenge that Marxist theory throws down, which is then blamed on the sensitivities of the rank and file.

Not to take on the business of learning Marxism as a science, but still to throw around terms like 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', 'socialism' and 'communism', is jargonising in its purest, most hypocritical form. If the party leadership educates itself, and then its rank and file, in the meanings of Marxist concepts, then this is no 'jargon' - it is revolutionary science!

Another example of the IRSP leadership's tendency to defer to the rank and file is the wish expressed to convene a congress; to get the stamp of authenticity from party members. This is very dangerous. To go into a congress, now or in the near future, with so many basic questions unanswered within the party, is to beg disaster.

Either any resolutions passed will be of a woolly variety or, if the party tries to come to terms with concrete problems, there is a danger of a split. Ideas have not been fought through and finely honed within the leadership - how can they then be aired, and resolved at a congress of only a few days duration, with comrades present who stand at different levels of political development?

We urge the IRSP to follow the example of Lenin and *Iskra*. No one voted to elect the *Iskra* editorial board, it appointed itself. It fought through its ideas within the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, and only when those ideas had been won did *Iskra* convene a congress of the party at which it was assured of the majority. Even then, the congress majority split into Bolshevik and Menshevik over a clause in the party rules.

To believe that a congress of the IRSP at this moment will be a smooth running productive affair is to be profoundly mistaken. Basic ideas of Marxism still have to be fought for and established. The medium for this must be Ireland's *Iskra* - the revolutionary paper which will clarify and develop theory and attract to its banners the most advanced elements of the revolutionary movement through that theory. Only then, with an established and experienced communist cadre won to these ideas, would we say that it is advisable to call a congress.

This deference to the rank and file is understandable, even if incorrect. Many comrades look round at those organisations that claim to be Marxist-Leninist, such as the Socialist Workers Movement (the Irish clone of our SWP) and People's Democracy (aligned to *Socialist Action*), and see them as what they are - ineffectual sects. They worry that to be 'too Marxist' would reduce them to the same status.

Of course, in some circumstances it is inevitable that a Marxist organisation will exist as a sect. But this is not the case in the revolutionary conditions of Ireland. The SWP, People's Democracy, et al are sects precisely

because they are not Marxist-Leninist. They are merely petty-bourgeois leftists. Faced with the competition of the republican movement, the only way that the IRSP is going to become a genuinely mass party is precisely through becoming a genuinely Marxist-Leninist party.

## Problems and Prospects

These are all problems that are coming to light as the IRSP develops and re-establishes itself. This is no bad thing. When a reactionary idea can be forced out into the open it can more easily be analysed, discussed and destroyed. Silence over differences, in the interests of 'unity', is deadly.

Lenin, writing on the inner-party struggle against the Economists, made this point excellently: "Without struggle there cannot be a sorting out, and without a sorting out there cannot be any successful advance, nor can there be any *lasting unity*".

"...an open, frank struggle is one of the essential conditions for *restoring unity*".

"Yes, *restoring!* The kind of 'unity' that makes us conceal 'Economic' documents from our comrades like a secret disease, that makes us resent the publication of statements revealing what views are being propagated under a social democratic cover - such 'unity' is not worth a brass farthing, such 'unity' is sheer cant, it only aggravates the disease and makes it assume chronic, malignant form. That an open, frank and honest struggle will cure this disease and create a really united, vigorous and strong Social Democratic [communist - AM] movement - I do not for a moment doubt." (*Collected Works*, Vol.34, p53)

Marxism flourishes in open, sharp and honest debate. (IPLO, for example, has never published any pamphlets or papers. Its goon politics can only operate in the dark. Jimmy Brown, ideologue of the IPLO, phoned *The Leninist* promising us a document that would vindicate his position. Many months later we have yet to see this document. Go on, Jimmy; publish or be damned - publish and be damned! We dare you.) The emergence of differences is inevitable. Real life creates them. How to handle them is the key question.

In an organisation with the history of the IRSP it is unsurprising that differences are now surfacing. It would be a miracle were they not to. Precisely how should the party deal with them? Lenin again: "All members must make a calm and painstaking study of 1) the essence of the disagreements and 2) the development of the party struggle... A study must be made of both, and a demand made for the most exact, printed documents that can be thoroughly verified. Only a hopeless idiot will believe oral statements. If no documents are available, there must be an examination of witnesses on *both* or several sides and the grilling must take place in the presence of witnesses." (*Ibid*, Vol.32, pp43-44)

This may sound painfully exhaustive but, nevertheless, it is necessary. Of course, in the IRSP, ideas are only *beginning* to be clarified, clear differences are only *beginning* to emerge. All the more reason to combat them openly now and unite the party as painlessly and speedily as possible around Marxist-Leninist principles. Obviously, the paper is the vehicle for this.

We would contend that talk of 'jargon', 'false transposition' and the like are a hangover from the past. They are indicative of left nationalism. Of course, the comrades who argued these positions believe themselves to be communists. But the question is, where will the logic of their arguments take them, however honest their intentions? The direction of such logic must be exposed and fought. Such ideas are a block which must be removed if the IRSP is to achieve its declared aim of becoming a Marxist-Leninist party.

Far from weakening the IRSP, this will strengthen it, steeling it ideologically. Ideas never develop in a vacuum, they develop through conflict. Communist ideas within the IRSP will grow and take root most effectively if the remnants of the party's left nationalism are combated in ideological struggle in the most direct, uncompromising manner. Anything less cannot but lead the party back the way it came.

The choice is there for the IRSP: either compromise for the sake of unity, and in doing so merely lay the ground for the next crisis, or arm with Marxist-Leninist theory against the left nationalist ideas which still exist in the IRSP. There is no other way but this. In Lenin's words, publicity is the sword that heals the wound it itself makes. The IRSP must not flinch from taking up this weapon and wielding it in the cause of communism.

Alan Merrick

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## THE GULF

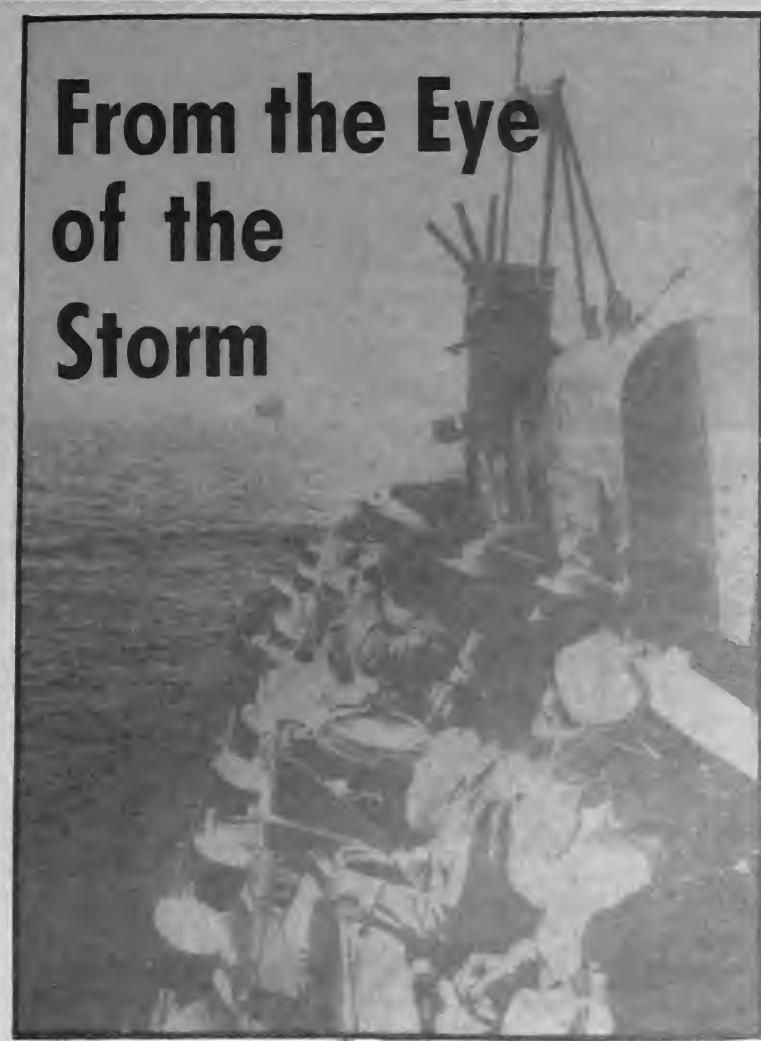
# From the Eye of the Storm

As is known, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, Santiago Carrillo, has his very own party which, given his refusal to work with any of Spain's other CPs, is strangely titled the "Workers Party of Spain - Communist Unity". Anyway, its recent congress had as a fraternal delegate from Britain, no, not a member of the editorial board of Marxism Today, but 'la Organización Comunista de Escocia e Inglaterra'. For you philistines out there we think this means the Communist Organisation of Scotland and England (who? we hear you ask). Carrillo, once vanguard ideologue of Eurocommunism, has it seems fraternal links with a sect of British followers of comrade Kim Il-Sung, no less! Will this set a trend for the kids at Marxism Today's Central Committee Outfitters? Is clothing for autonomy a clever front for Juche?

The report of Mick Costello's departure from the Morning Star that appeared in the UK Press Gazette of August 10 had some intriguing features. According to it, Mr Costello is "one of Fleet Street's most highly regarded industrial correspondents". Yet he was only paid a pittance ... Hmm. It refers not to "Mr" but to "Dr" Tony Chater - a fact even Fleet Street's best are unlikely to know offhand. The report also gives details of Costello "exclusives" (dubious as they are). What, or who, was the source of this Costello puff up in the Gazette? Not the Morning Star; that would be to tell its readers the truth. So, could it have been Mr Costello himself? Perish the thought.

Gerry 'Diabolical Materialism' Healy has provided a real gut-buster with his latest venture, the hopelessly misnamed 'Marxist Party'. It even got a write-up by one Andrew Bell in London's Time Out. In fact, so did we, by virtue of the fact that Healy's one time Gensec Mike Banda "cuddled up" to us some time ago. According to Bell we are, it seems, a "hardcore Stalinist group". You just can't win can you? The Trotskyists call us Stalinist; the 'Stalinists' call us Trotskyist. What's wrong with 'Leninist'?

The National Front is energetically promoting the Green Book, the handbook of Colonel Gadaffi's political thoughts, to what it chooses to call its "cadres and traitors".



Iranian navy on manoeuvre. The 'tanker war' has internationalised the Gulf war

### Should communists defend Khomeini? How will peace be won?

THE CRISIS in the Gulf has quite understandably been the centre of media attention, it is the storm centre of war and crisis. What has received hardly any publicity is the only force which can resolve the crisis progressively - that is the working class and the forces of communism.

To rectify this we publish below an interview with a member of the Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rah-e Kargar). The last issue of *The Leninist* gave a brief outline history and assessment of this, and other, communist organisations in Iran.

While it would be surprising if we agreed with all the comrade says here, there can be little doubt that ORWI does not suffer from the opportunist sickness which grips virtually every other left and communist organisation in Iran. We certainly consider ORWI part of the growing revolutionary communist current in the world working class movement.

**The Leninist:** How does Rah-e Kargar interpret the current situation in the Gulf?

What we have seen is the internationalisation of the war. The war appears to have entered a new phase and become 'internationalised'. To understand this one has to go back a year or so.

The real change occurred with the massive land attacks that Iran made one and a half years ago. Iran extended the ground war into Kurdistan in the north and the Faw Peninsula around Basra in the south in opening a front of over 1,700 km. Although Iran did not actually achieve its objective of getting Basra or defeating Iraq, it did make gains in territory and other facets of the war and this resulted in a significant change in the balance between the two belligerents.

Iraq had only one way of responding to this situation: attacking Iran using its superior fire and air power. They bombed cities in the so-called war of the cities in an attempt to create anti-war pressure from below.

The other aspect of this was economic, which focuses on oil because it is oil which is providing the money for the continuation of the war. This makes the Gulf the main arena for the economic war since this is an international waterway one can say that this war was internationalised. They extended the war to involve everyone else. The tanker war became bilateral.

But the internationalisation of the war has another facet. Iran in effect said, 'if I can't get my oil out, no one can get their oil out'. But such talk has been going on for four years. What hotted things up? The very fact that it threatened not just Kuwaiti ships but Kuwait itself made a qualitative difference in the whole balance. This, and Iran's other preparations for extending the war, were a threat to Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf states. This was a new factor. Before, it had been 'if you hit my ship, I'll hit your ship'. Now it's 'I'll hit your country'.

The Gulf states responded partially by appealing to their imperialist allies, who at the same time wanted a more direct presence in the Gulf. Kuwait's invitation for the US to come into the Gulf looked like it precipitated the internationalisation of the war. In fact it was a response to what had occurred at least 18 months earlier.

In our view it was the location of the rockets in the Faw Peninsula which was the key event from which everything else followed. The threat was serious and the war has entered a new phase. Any continuation of the war, in our view, can only mean its extension beyond its present confines.

**The Leninist:** What is your assessment of the imperialists' actions in the region?

The US policy is contradictory, vacillating between friendliness and belligerency. It sees Iran as a strategic ally. Reagan clearly stated this at the time of Irangate when he said that Iran, as an anti-communist state, was an ally of America in the long term. But, in the short term, it can come over as

a tactical enemy in the sense that it is destabilising the region.

The US feels that it is vital to keep stability here. When the situation in the area is critical it is the tactical element which comes to the fore, and when it settles down, the strategic. These two aspects create what appears a quite contradictory policy, as illustrated by 'Irangate' and today's warships.

**The Leninist:** What, then, are the aims of the heavy military US presence in the Gulf?

For the US stability in this vital area is a paramount concern. It aims to dampen down the current crisis there and have a physical presence there to intervene should further crises develop. It wants to have the facilities to intervene militarily in the war on the side of Iraq, or at least Kuwait, should the conflict flare up.

But it also has long term aims. The US does not want to just open up the Hormuz straits, it wants a permanent presence, something it has wanted for years and been unable to achieve. The present crisis has given it the opportunity.

The intervention also focuses away from the 'lame duck' image of the presidency and has beefed up its image. It is preparing the US public for future military interventions not just in the Gulf but in other areas. If they can shove this down the throats of the American public today, they can do it with other interventions tomorrow.

**The Leninist:** There are reports that Khomeini no longer believes that he can win the war, that he 'wants out'. Is this possible for the regime?

We believe the regime to be a reactionary religious Bonapartist regime sitting on top of a defeated revolution. This regime has two components: the dominant political power gathered in the hands of the ayatollahs, and its ally the bazaar bourgeoisie. These two tend to see the war somewhat differently.

The bazaar group would like an end to the war providing it can be guaranteed with a huge indemnity. The ruling mullahs essentially require the war to go on in order to mobilise its 'hazbollah' popular base of support. The nature of this regime requires 'war, war until the end of sedition on earth', as Khomeini so nicely put it. What this means is that the Islamic revolution, if it does not expand, is likely to succumb to its internal contradictions, and they know it.

If this is not understood you cannot understand the way the Islamic Republic is acting in the whole of the region. The 'export of the Islamic revolution' is linked in with the very structure of the regime. It is in such a context that the Iran/Iraq war has to be considered.

The Islamic Republic at this moment has made a tactical withdrawal. Its current demands for peace are similar to those it made before Iran recaptured the city of Khorramshahr in 1981. It wants to buy time and reduce the pressures on it. This does not mean that the strategic aims of the Islamic Republic have changed. It can warm things up and cool them down tactically, but in essence it still has to involve the Gulf states. Even if Iran, for whatever reason, settles for a peace in this war then this in no way implies that Iran will settle for a peace in the area. War will flare up elsewhere because of the very nature of the Islamic Republic.

We do not believe that peace can come under the Islamic Republic. We therefore have to create the situation for civil war and revolution. This particular war may end through various factors, internal and external, but in the long term

the regime needs war. So the demand for peace is linked to the demand for revolution.

**The Leninist:** Most of the petty bourgeois left in Britain takes the simplistic view that, because Britain and the US are imperialist and Iran is not, they must call for victory to Iran in the Gulf conflict. What is your view on this?

It is perfectly obvious that the views you describe are not only simplistic but un-Marxist. Marxism analyses any position from a class point of view. This includes the anti-imperialist struggle. That force is anti-imperialist which is not against the working class. In other words, you can't have anti-imperialist positions from a totally reactionary point of view.

If a regime, no matter how 'anti-imperialist' in what it says and does, is at the same time destroying the organisations of the working class in that country, then that regime does not deserve the support of communists. Putting it differently, the job of communists is to organise the working class and toilers for a revolution. The anti-imperialist struggle only has meaning around this line.

The Islamic Republic, from the moment it came into power stood out against working class and democratic organisations and started to destroy them physically. The Iranian revolution had the potential of going beyond capitalism. The Islamic regime stood out against this and destroyed it. For this reason the regime was reactionary from the very moment that it came into power.

To ask Iranian communists to stop their class war and support such a regime is nothing short of treachery. Iran is a capitalist state. The capitalist mode of production is the dominant mode of production. The job of communists is to organise for a socialist revolution, which at this moment has to go through a democratic phase but with a socialist orientation. So, to that extent, I think the policy of these people has been entirely wrong.

**The Leninist:** How has the Tudeh Party responded to the US intervention? For instance, looking back at what could be an analogous event, when the Malvinas war broke out, Argentinian exiled communists in Cuba queued up outside the Argentinian embassy in Havana to join up and fight for the regime that had murdered and imprisoned many thousands of their comrades. Given the political similarities between the Communist Party of Argentina and Tudeh, are we likely to see Tudeh act in a similar fashion?

If Tudeh followed the logic of its arguments then it should, in fact, do that. The logic is, if the Soviet Union comes closer to the Islamic Republic, then so must Tudeh. The logic is also, if the Islamic regime makes any 'anti-imperialist' noise it should be supported. We saw this in the US embassy pantomime.

We saw this in the revolution, when Tudeh stood against the class war and supported the Islamic Republic to the hilt and backed its war. Later it backtracked and called for a 'just peace' - in this context a peace with indemnities, just what the bourgeoisie wants.

On your question, however, Tudeh will not be able to take such a supportive position. Firstly, because its internal dissensions will not allow it to make any coherent policy decisions [see issue 53 of *The Leninist*] and, secondly, because the Islamic Republic wouldn't allow it to do anything like that. So I don't think that it will do so, even though this is the logic of its positions.



## Towards Communism

Long Kesh Communist League, *Congress '86*, pp12, 75p

THE JAILS of the oppressors have always served as the universities of the oppressed. Whether in Tsarist Russia, Iran, Turkey or wherever, imprisoned revolutionaries have made good use of their incarceration to study in situations where the tempo of revolutionary activity in the outside world has not permitted this luxury.

Irish republican prisoners of war have been no exception to this. Many leaders of the republican movement, past and present, have had their views forged in the prisons of British imperialism. Long

Kesh prison camp has justly earned the name of the university of republicanism. It has seen freedom fighters enter it without two bits of theory to rub together, only to leave as well versed political thinkers and leaders.

Now Long Kesh has produced a group of POWs originating from the IRA who, frustrated with their inability to make political impact on the republican movement, have established a group called the Communist League within the prison. The publication of a twelve page journal, *Congress '86*, emanates from this group.

They present their writings thus: "As communists, the positions expressed here by the contributors are offered in a comradely and honest form. It is the wish of all revolutionaries that their work be taken seriously. Read on, then, in the spirit of the magazine and decide issues for yourselves."

While we heartily welcome the publication of *Congress '86*, we do nevertheless have criticisms of aspects of the analysis put forward in its pages. We therefore state them, communist to communist, in the interest of comradely debate and clarity. For instance, the editorial calls for the convening of a new Republican Congress, along the lines of the anti-imperialist united front of the same name in 1934.

The writer states: "Socialists and Fenians might have diametrically opposed views. Fine. As democrats we can argue our re-

spective positions and abide by the majority." This position presents problems.

What if the 'Fenian' (nationalist) organisation has a position which opposes the right of women to abortion on demand, which at the moment Sinn Fein does. Would communists then, if in the minority, in the interests of 'unity' and 'democracy', concede to the loss of this basic democratic right? A thousand times no! We may compromise tactically with our allies, but under no circumstances can we give so much as an inch on matters of principle. This may be what the author of these lines means but, nevertheless, the meaning remains unclear.

The Communist League's approach to the Protestant working class seems overly dismissive: "The current status quo serves the collective better interests of the northern labouring aristocracy and its Orange masters cum benefactors." The two strata mentioned here are far from identical. The northern capitalists have every interest in the maintenance of the status quo. The Protestant proletariat, even though they are bought off by British imperialism, even though they are under the influence of the fascistic ideology of loyalism, do not stop being workers.

Privilege does not contradict the basic labour/capital contradiction, it just masks it. There is a contradiction here. This was shown in the

1934 Republican Congress which the comrades of the Communist League look towards, which organised significant sections of the Protestant working class. Besides this fact, communists in Ireland need to develop a strategy to fragment, neutralise and even win sections of the Protestant workers. To believe that the Irish revolution can be made while British imperialism and Irish capitalism has the massive counterrevolutionary crutch of loyalism in the Six Counties is unrealistic, as is labelling them as identical to their Orange masters.

The economic analysis in *Congress '86* falls into the trap that so many others have; that is to try and give a revolutionary interpretation of essentially bourgeois economics — rooting the contradictions of capitalism in the circulation process not, as Marx did, in the production process. The following quote from *Congress '86* illustrates what we mean: "Free market economies have a constant tendency to develop excess capacity which causes profits to decline or even disappear."

The comrade is putting the cart before the horse. Capitalist (not just free market) economies, because of the inherent nature of capitalist production, are subject to the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. The capitalist must therefore produce an excess of capital to retain the necessary mass of profit. The proof of this is obviously far more complicated than is

stated here, but this is not the place to offer a postage stamp regurgitation of Marx's *Capital*. (But see, for example, Frank Grafton's *The Road from Marxism...* in issue 1 of *The Leninist*)

Again, we must state that it is in no way our intention to do a 'demolition job' on the comrades who have written *Congress '86*. It is a communist duty to state criticisms openly and, while we do have criticisms, we unequivocally support this development.

That a group of imprisoned revolutionaries should break from their past tradition, openly proclaiming themselves communists, that they call for a vanguard party and that they seem to identify themselves with the existing gains of the working class, in the shape of the socialist countries, is of great importance. They reject the 'labour must wait' position of Sinn Fein and state that national and social emancipation are inseparable. This is indeed encouraging. We welcome *Congress '86* with open arms.

It states: "Our immediate demand...is: build the vanguard and build it now." These comrades are advancing towards communism and looking for — demanding — a revolutionary communist alternative. It is a challenge that communists in Ireland must take up. If they do, where the Long Kesh Communist League has led, many others will follow.

Alan Merrick

## POLEMIC

sitions. The CCG leadership has got it the wrong way round. They say, first "re-establish" the Party, then discuss fundamentals.

After the 40th Congress of the CPGB (November 14-17) the CCG will presumably convene its own congress and declare itself to be the Party. Honest CCGers who believe that those fighting for revisionist politics, like the CCG leadership, can possibly give birth (or re-birth) to a revolutionary party should think again.

Dave Anderson at least has the decency to mention other opposition tendencies in and around the Party, but his analysis is limited to one sentence for *Proletarian* and one paragraph each for *The Leninist* and *Straight Left*. Here is what he says about us:

"The misnamed Leninist group is in reality an undercover Trotskyist organisation, without any real impact on the inner-party struggle and its anti-Sovietism shows through the veneer of quotations and revolutionary posturing which are a feature of its paper."

Readers will judge for themselves whether Anderson's description of our influence is accurate or mere wishful thinking, but when the comrade calls us "undercover" we would ask him to recognise the necessity for combining the concealment of the identity of comrades for reasons of political security (from both the Party misleaders and the state) with open ideological struggle in front of the masses.

It is the CCG and *Morning Star* which are 'undercover' in this latter sense, protecting their supporters from unpleasant facts and disagreements.

Why was the PPPS AGM not informed of the impending sale of the *Star's* Farringdon Road building? Why no report of the fact that the management committee split 50:50 on this and why did industrial correspondent Mick Costello hand in his notice? Why was CCG national organiser Ray Colvin heard grumbling that "nobody ever tells me anything"? Why has the *CCR* never mentioned the South Wales CCG *Discussion Papers*, reprinted in full in *The Leninist* 47/48 or the four distinct

tendencies in the CCG? Who is 'undercover' — *The Leninist* or the CCG?

As for *The Leninist* being Trotskyite, this is a bit thick coming from a grouping which is about to give up the Communist Party as a bad job, as Trotsky did, only to form itself into a pressure group on the Labour Party, like most Trotskyites in Britain (who ironically label us "ultra-Stalinist").

Then there is Sarah Colvin's letter insisting that "what is going on in the Soviet Union is, in comrade Gorbachev's words, a revolution..." In our view, of course, it is not a revolution, but if we had demanded a revolution in the Soviet Union a couple of years ago, Sarah Colvin would have called this Trotskyism. Are we "anti-Soviet" for telling the truth and calling reform, reform?

In spite of Sarah Colvin's readiness to agree with absolutely anything that comrade Gorbachev says, glasnost is not the CCG's strong point and for that matter nor is revolutionary politics. This *Review* issue in particular is full of concern for the fate of the bourgeois party of the working class, the Labour Party.

The editorial calls for "a lasting majority for Labour" — and this is the theme of Tom Durkin's lead article entitled "Fighting Back". Durkin successfully shows that "successive Labour governments have operated right wing policies" and pays special attention to demolishing the idolised 1945 Labour government, which "was committed to collaboration with capitalism from the beginning... Post war reconstruction was in fact tailored to the needs of monopoly capital".

To then reach the conclusion that "the key question, therefore, is how can we stop the Tories and build a lasting majority for Labour?" is surely worth a Nobel prize for creative thinking. Comrade Durkin cannot imagine socialism without the Labour Party. He wants a Communist Party to generate mass struggle so that "ordinary working people" will vote Labour. We want to win the mass base of the Labour Party for communism. We are not fighting for a lasting majority for Labour. We want a lasting (that is until

communism) majority for the Communist Party.

Mike Ambrose is also a Labour-phile. He pretends that only the Labour right is reformist, and that the "labour movement will go on repeating the mistakes of the past" until it learns to put faith in principles rather than princes. Unlike Durkin, he makes no argument for a Communist Party, only a lament for the Labour Party of his dreams. We think if he loves the Labour Party so much he should join it.

Equally revisionist is Alan McKinnon who asks the powers that be to stand up for Britain, "break the grip of American domination, break with Nato and create an independent foreign policy based on non-alignment." Then our country "would truly become a force for peace and progress throughout the world." Britain is for us still one of the world's strongest imperialist powers. For McKinnon and the CCG it now exists only as a dependent and very junior partner of American imperialism. One wonders why the CCG leaders feel such antipathy towards the Euros.

Ian Farrell

## Where's the Glasnost?

Communist Campaign Group, *Communist Campaign Review* No 5, Autumn 1987, pp32, £1.00

CONGRATULATIONS to comrade Dave Anderson of London! Your letter to *CCR* is the only contribution which makes any attempt to answer editor Ray Colvin's call (in *CCR* 4) for a "widespread discussion" on the CCG's schizophrenic perspective of "re-establishing" the Communist Party by splitting/not splitting.

Not that "widespread discussions" are not taking place. The problem is that they are secret, in dingy pub room corners or in Habitat furnished bijou flats. We know there is discontent, cabals and counter-cabals in the Communist Campaign Group but their debates and dissensions are not reflected in the *CCR*.

The problem is that open polemic, different views, honesty, are a danger to the fragile bureaucratic unity of the CCG.

The organisational unity of communists, about which the CCG leaders dream, can only be achieved through open (public) ideological struggle for ideological unity on scientific Leninist po-

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Dogan Can: Menshevik and police stool pigeon

# Guilty of Opportunism

HERE ARE some who have an interest in causing confusion in the British workers' movement when it comes to the politics of Turkey. A violent incident in Stoke Newington last year proves this beyond doubt.

The *Morning Star* of April 28, 1986 carried a malicious and totally untrue report of this incident. It accused supporters of *Iscin Sesi* — the paper of the Communist Party of Turkey — of staging a violent provocation. That was a lie. And in spite of having carried a letter from Max Hiron, the general secretary of the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey, which nailed the distortions, the *Star* has carried no apology. Here are the facts of the case.

### Fists and Flower Pots

On April 26 1986, supporters of the Union of Turkish Workers, the Union of Turkish Progressives and the Union of Turkish Women in Britain, three broad organisations affiliated to the CDDRT, attempted to attend a meeting in

Stoke Newington town hall organised to launch a campaign to win an amnesty for 'illegal' Turkish workers in Britain.

'Attempted' because they were refused entry on the door to this meeting, despite the long and proud work amongst the Turkish community in Britain of these three organisations and their principled campaigns against all deportations. Why? Simply because this meeting was organised under the auspices of the Turkish Halkevi community centre, an organisation which is a front for the Mensheviks of the 'official' United Communist Party of Turkey who use every opportunity to attack organisations it sees as sympathetic to *Iscin Sesi*.

Refused entry to this supposedly 'public' meeting, our comrades contented themselves with selling and distributing literature, including literature from the Turkish section of Islington Labour Party. The Halkevi stewards, however, were intent on harassing the sellers, acting in a very hostile and provocative manner. In spite of this those refused entry were not provoked.

They did not respond in kind to the abuse of the opportunists and moved when accused of causing an "obstruction". In short, they acted in a disciplined communist manner, while the Mensheviks acted like goons.

Frustrated by failure, the Halkevi stewards launched a vicious and totally unprovoked attack, using fists, feet and large sticks. The fight spilled out into the middle of the road and became a *melee* of flying fists, sticks and flower pots from the front of local shops as the victims of the attack defended themselves with anything that came to hand.

The scrum died down soon enough, but that unfortunately, was not the end of the sorry affair. The Mensheviks had, true to form, called the police. When the boys in blue arrived, the Halkevi stewards fell over themselves in their rush to finger members of the UTP, UTP and UTWB and the Turkish Section of Islington Labour Party. Later, it became clear that the Mensheviks had set up the incident in order to get the British state to do what they themselves had

been unable to do politically — defeat the ideas of *Iscin Sesi*.

Halkevi leaders drew up a list of names of political opponents, including one who was actually nowhere near the vicinity of the incident, whom they wanted out of the way. The list was handed over to the notorious Stoke Newington police.

Revolutionary politics in Turkey is a serious business, torture is a matter of routine in the prisons and police stations. Hence, the principled tradition of not involving the state in disputes and internal affairs, no matter how sharp these conflicts become, is even more important in Turkey than in a western democracy. (There are those in our Party — Doug 'Chalmers of the Yard' for one — who have violated this principle; he called the Stoke Newington police on oppositionist members of the Young Communist League in November 1983.) The Mensheviks violated this principle, earning themselves the contempt of all class conscious workers. They even sunk to the depths of cooperating with police identity parades in the sweatshops of East London where many workers from Turkey work. They cared neither for communist morality nor for the safety of migrant workers from Turkey, many of whom probably had fragile status in this country.

These identity parades were designed to threaten and intimidate. Some workers were scared by the Mensheviks and their friends in blue into identifying the wrong people and, embarrassingly, ascribed the wrong names to those 'identified'. But the police proved themselves amenable to the Halkevi leaders. If an identity parade did not go the 'right' way, the police would simply hold another, and another, until the person they were after did get picked out.

The fifth's enthusiasm is explained by the fact that the Halkevi leaders cynically red-bait. The police were told that all were supporters of *Iscin Sesi*, a "communist" and "revolutionary" organisation (true), and also apparently, a "terrorist" one (decidedly untrue). They themselves on the other hand, the Mensheviks assured the police, were simply unpolitical community workers interested in seeing justice done, British style.

### The Trial.

The trial finally took place at Snaresborough Crown Court from June 8 to July 28 1987. With the Mensheviks' active assistance nine were charged by the state with affray, with two of them facing additional charges of grievous bodily harm. They called hardly any witnesses for their defence. They didn't need to; nearly every time they opened their mouths, the Halkevi supporters landed themselves in it.

The doctor who examined the alleged 'victim' of a 'premeditated assault' reported to the court that instead of having lost the use of one eye and sustained brain damage, he had sustained no more than minor cuts and bruises. 'Whoops', the Mensheviks must have thought when the judge felt compelled to drop the GBH charges.

In fact, the testimony of all the Halkevi people was distinctly whoopsy. It was vague, contradictory and created the impression of being freshly manufactured and badly under-rehearsed. But the highlight of the whole trial, the Halkevi *piece de resistance*, was undoubtedly the performance of Mr Dogan Can, president of Halkevi community centre.

Mr Can is well known in the Turkish community in London, al-

though not as a unwavering campaigner for workers' rights. Mr Can is a sweatshop owner. Mr Can is not only a sweatshop owner, he is a typical sweatshop owner, given to tricks like declaring himself bankrupt to defraud 'his' workers of their holiday pay and the like, then reopening under another name. A real representative of his class in other words.

Mr Can thus became decidedly ratty when pressed on details of his finances by the defence lawyer. In fact, the man was rather put out by the fact that he had to answer questions at all: he simply presumed that he could swan along to the court, make his statement, then breeze out again. The judge patiently explained that British courts are not quite like that...

The defendants were aware through second hand information that the Halkevi supporters had attempted to finger "illegal" immigrants to the police, and here Mr Can came up trumps. In the course of his evidence he let it be known that he as president of the Halkevi centre, had actually supplied the names of "illegal" workers to the British police! Readers should remember that this amazing admission came from the president of an organisation, the Halkevi, that had organised a meeting that was claiming to launch an immigrants' rights campaign!

Can also let slip that Halkevi had in fact set up a "special unit" to attack the defendants with sticks on the night of April 27 1986. Previously, it had been claimed that the defendants had turned up with the sticks. Can found it hard to explain how these sticks ended up in his possession at the end of the evening. The jury smirked and giggled its way through the inept Mr Can's evidence. It has been said of him that the trial illustrated that he only opens his mouth in order to change feet.

### "Terrorists"

The real turning point in the trial came however, when a long term Halkevi supporter broke ranks and actually told the truth. This man was so disgusted with the lies, the shady operations and the collaboration with the British police that his comrades had been guilty of, that he gave evidence against Halkevi and simply blew their case sky high.

He testified that it was in fact Halkevi supporters who had armed themselves with sticks and who had launched a totally unprovoked attack. The defendants bore no responsibility for the Stoke Newington battle. End of argument.

With their case in tatters, the prosecution resorted to branding *Iscin Sesi* as a "terrorist" organisation. The evidence for this claim? The simple fact that they "are against the Turkish government", or in other words, the same argument that the reactionary, anti-democratic government in Turkey uses to arrest, torture and execute its opponents on the left. The charge of "terrorist" levelled against *Iscin Sesi* is one that could only be made by those who stand against revolution. It is a charge that tells us far more about those who make it than about comrades from *Iscin Sesi*. In reality, *Iscin Sesi* supports a popular revolution in Turkey.

In his summing up at the end of the trial, the judge had to put it straight to the jury: "If you think an attack came from the Halkevi members in the hall then you must find them (the defendants) not guilty". The jury took just one hour to find all the defendants not guilty on all counts!

Ian Mahoney